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To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/25/02 10:49pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

As a registered voter in the state of Maryland and a computer professional with 18 years of experience, I would like to take advantage of the opportunity to comment on the proposed settlement between the Department of Justice and Microsoft. While I am not qualified to comment on the legal aspects of the case, I am quite qualified to comment on the technical aspects. However, it is from my perspective as a parent that I have taken a position on this issue.

I volunteered my services in the PTA Technology committee of my daughter's elementary school for 3 years. During that time, the school was provided a computer lab which used Microsoft operating systems and networking software. In planning sessions with the county's IT representatives, we discussed how teachers would be able to use the lab for classwork. I asked how they planned to provide students with user IDs and private work space and discovered that this would not be possible because of the expense and support requirements. When I asked how the students were to maintain their work, I found that the other schools with labs provided floppy disks for each student.

I was astounded. I cannot imagine teachers having time to insert and eject 20 to 30 floppy disks on a regular basis, and so I was sure that the computer lab's effectiveness would be reduced tremendously. In fact, when my daughter began using it, she told me that all she ever did in it was to play some semi-educational games.

The Microsoft and Apple personal computer operating systems were originally designed to be used exclusively by individuals, and therefore do not have multi-user controls built into them. There have been additions to provide some features of a multi-user system, but these are minimal, and in many cases, ineffective. Other operating systems, in particular those based on UNIX, were designed from the beginning for multiple users.

If it were not for the illegal monopolistic practices of Microsoft, school computer labs could be provided with systems that would support many users, each with their own private environment, which would be easily accessible by teachers. This would enable teachers to take advantage of the power of computers to assist in teaching, as opposed to the computer labs being so difficult to use that they become little more than a recreational break.

I hope that the court will weigh heavily the evidence of negative consequences such as these, which have occurred mostly due to Microsoft's abuse of its monopoly. I support a judgement that will

prevent Microsoft from continuing to use its monopoly in ways that have been determined by the appeals court to have been illegal.

Thank you.

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